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No. 9

LUNA COUNTY, NEW MEXICO

A Serial Story of Its History, People, Stock, Mining and Commercial Industries, Railway Facilities and Educational Advantages.

PART I.

(Continued from last week.)

At the outset the whole settlement was on the park land, but within a few months the settlers divided up, the best citizens coming up to the town laid out by Mr. Wilder and securing lots with titles to hold them, the adventurers and tough element remaining in the park. Soon the tents began to disappear and and board shanties and some good houses to take their places. The saloons and dance halls remained mostly in the park, but the business houses spread out over the blocks bounded by Spruce street on the south, Pine street on the north and from Silver to Gold avenues east and west. The first well was put down by old man Chard just back of where Kinnear & Co's store is; it was a driven well. Three public wells were put down, one in the street in front of what is now the Brewery saloon, one on the northwest corner of Spruce street and Silver avenue, and one at the foot of Silver avenue in the park. These wells furnished the water supply of the town for some time until private wells were put in, and then were devoted to the use of the long lines of ox, horse and pack trains coming with ore, beans and other produce from Mexico. This trade was a great source of profit to the business of the town and was handled mostly by Aaron Schutz and Julius Elbey. It was an inspiring sight of an evening to watch these gentlemen on their way to the express office with a burro load of Mexican pesos for shipment east. Until the building of the Whitney narrow gauge to Silver City all freight for Grant county and the Magdalena country went from here by ox and mule trains, and two coach lines carried the passenger traffic. All this made booming business for Deming and the mercantile establishments were crowded in as thickly as could be in the district mentioned. E. Germain & Co. (I. Fleishman, manager), Armstrong & Lockhart and Hopper Bros. had the bulk of the grocery and general merchandise trade; Aaron Schutz, Julius Elbey and P. Allen supplied the dry goods and clothing; Tony Clark was the town baker and had a nice little family grocery, and J. A. Mahoney a modest little news stand and confectionery on Gold avenue. Joe could have moved his stock those days in a hand basket, and the move wouldn't have made him tired. Business grew so rapidly that large and better buildings were demanded, and the men were on the ground with the money and nerve to furnish them. The first good frame building erected was at the southwest corner of Spruce street and Gold avenue, by Henry Holgate, and was occupied by Holgate & Raithel as a butcher shop. The building is still in the same line of business and is owned by Henry Meyer. The first good residence in the town was erected by a man named Garrison just west of where now stands the drug store of J. A. Kinnear & Co. It was not easy to get building material to supply the demand, and Barry Martin's brick yard was taxed to its utmost capacity. By the close of 1882, or early in 1883, the tents had completely disappeared from the business portion of the town and given place to many substantial brick and frame structures. Col. J. P. McGrorty's brick, now the telephone central station, was one of the first brick buildings erected. This was followed as quickly as material could be had by the Craven's brick (now Killinger's), the big Lockhart & Hopper Bros. store at the corner of Gold avenue and Pine street, burned in 1889; the two story brick at the corner of Gold avenue and Pine street also burned in 1889; the handsome two story brick erected by Jake Raithel on the lot now occupied by Mahoney's furniture store, burned in 1886, and the Thurmond & Shephard's Cabinet saloon at the corner of Silver avenue and Pine street, and a brick saloon building about where the Aquarium now stands,

Betterton's wholesale liquor store on Silver avenue, now owned by W. J. Wamel, and the Bishop Dunlap bricks, on Spruce street, now owned by A. M. Kinsworthy. Judge Bristol had erected two good brick dwellings for rent on Spruce street. Everything was frame or box until late in 1883, when fire destroyed the frame row from the alley next to the Deming Mercantile store to the Gardner & Gillies brick on Gold avenue, burning out Elbey, Clark, Mahoney, Loomis and Dr. Keefe. This fire was a great gain to the town, for immediately the burned shanties were replaced by Col. McGrorty and A. J. Clark with a row of handsome two story bricks. The residence portion of the town was keeping pace with the business center, and neat little cottage houses were springing up all around. By the middle of 1883 it became a fad with the residents, to plant trees and flowers, and the town took on the appearance of a city of homes.

Among the first of the substantial buildings erected was the Methodist church. Parson Stanton had come here almost with the first settlers, and started to building a house unto the Lord,

and sent it to the surface. The rock had a peculiar appearance, and an examination of it by such scientists as B. Y. McKeyes, Dr. Proctor and Dick, Washington, developed the fact that the fossilized remains of an immense mastodon had been discovered. The scientists wanted to unearth the whole thing, but that would have spoiled the shape of the well, and Pat said he was digging for water, not mastodons, and so the case was closed. The upper jaw measured three feet in length and a tooth about four inches across, so that now fully forty feet of mastodon is peacefully sleeping under the foundation of the Lindauer Mercantile company store.

And speaking of mastodons brings to mind Bob Campbell. Bob was a character with more brains than education. As a democratic campaign manager he could give Billy Brian pointers, and as an anti-Chinese agitator Dennis Kearney wasn't "in it" with Bob. One night when sore oppressed with cares of state, Bob was wending his way from the Cabinet to Boger's resort, lost his bearings somehow, walked into the McGeeney well, and spent the night communing with the mastodon. He was discovered and hauled out next morning. Bob never revealed what the mastodon told him, but a few days after when the republican primary convention convened at the opera house, Bob came up to the mourners' bench, formally renounced his democratic sins and professed the true faith. He was an enthusiastic worker in the good cause through that campaign, but when

years his brother-in-law, Carl Ehrmann, who in '87 or '88 sold out to Jake Raithel. This combination was short lived, and Mr. Deckert has for years been going it alone.

In the early days before the present liberal public school law was enacted it was no easy matter—in fact an impossibility—to maintain a public school upon the revenue derived from the taxes, more than three months in a year. Our people were determined always to have a continuous school, and to do this all manner of expedients were resorted to; monthly subscriptions, donations, and principally public entertainments, which were liberally patronized more for the cause than the character of the entertainments. Enterprising ladies of Deming always had some plan on foot to raise money for this purpose, and their efforts met a ready endorsement from all the people. Some really good entertainments were given at the old opera house, for we had an array of talent—musical and dramatic—hard to beat anywhere. In 1881 an organization styled "The Jolly Beggars" was perfected for the purpose of giving entertainments to raise money for the schools and other public purposes, and while the need for it lasted did some good work. Their first effort was "The Doctor of Alcantara," which had two productions. The sopranos in the cast were Mrs. Max Chapman, Miss Mamie Fielder, Mrs. Geo. Sleight, Miss Cora Hopkins, the leading alto; W. P. Tossell, Chas. Rocknab, bass; Frank Siebold and W. H. Woodburn, baritone; N. A. Bolich, leading tenor.

PART II.

On this page is given a view of the interior of the grocery and meat market of J. and S. C. Stenson. This business was founded in 1881 by the senior member of the firm John Stenson who came to Deming from the upper Mimbres valley the year before, he having lived there and followed ranching and stock raising for a number of years. After founding the business Mr. Stenson conducted it in his own name until 1881, and during these years won a reputation for honest dealing and for keeping the best class of goods in his line which brought him a large trade both from the town and surrounding country. In 1889 his son graduated from the Deming high school and a partnership was formed under the name of J. and S. C. Stenson. The new firm has continued to do business on the principles laid down by the old and have steadily increased their patronage until today the firm is one of the solid institutions of our town.

James S. Fielder was born at Hainsbridge Georgia, February 4th 1855. In the Spring of 1882 Mr. Fielder went to California where he remained for about two years working on the farm and studying law at intervals. In the spring of 1884 Mr. Fielder came to Deming where he pursued the study of law in the office with his father until he reached the age of twenty-one, when he was admitted to the bar at Los Angeles. In 1888 and located in El Paso Texas. At this time his father, Herbert Fielder, and his brother Idus L. Fielder were law partners, the former at Deming and the latter at Silver City. In October 1889 his father died at Deming and being devised by his brother to a partnership, Mr. Fielder moved to Silver City, and entered the partnership with his brother, where he remained until December last when he moved to Deming to assume the management of the place and facilities.

Since Mr. Fielder located at Silver City and up to the present he has been actively engaged in the practice of law, and has represented one side or the other in nearly every important case that has arisen since that time in this Judicial District, and to say that he has been successful wherever success was possible is not stating the case to broadly, the records of the courts demonstrate this.

The legal talent is a peculiar one, like the musician and poet, the lawyer is born, not made. The born lawyer sees the vital point in the case as readily as a cat smells a rat, and never loses sight of it in side issues. Mr. Fielder's mind runs to the vital point in the case like the needle to the pole, he enjoys the respect of all his brother lawyers and the judges on the bench. All speak highly of him as a man and of his strong natural talent as a lawyer and lawyers ought to be able to judge each other better than any other people. Mr. Fielder has probably devoted more time to the study of general literature than any other man in southern New Mexico. He had not the advantage of a collegiate education but by his presistent application he has made himself an accomplished scholar.

Mr. Fielder was a democratic member of the New Mexico council in 1901 but since that time has become dissatisfied with the drift of the democratic party and its unwillingness to meet present conditions; thinks that many of the evils from which our ancestors suffered in England, such as standing armies etc. are at the present time in this country, mere buggaboos, and that the republican party, notwithstanding the evils that have grown up under it, is the party of progress and more nearly in harmony with present conditions. Would rather be a republican than a democrat as the two parties stand to day, but hates what he calls the "villainous history of the republican party" and will not fraternize with republicans for that reason.

Like the Place.

J. D. Hodges and family who landed here last Monday morning from Arizona in a wagon have bought property and are going to build a home in Deming. The business outlook and the splendid school advantages pleased them so much that they decided at once this was the place to settle.



Interior View of J. and S. C. Stenson's Grocery Store.

Parson Stanton wasn't much of a preacher, but one of the best men that ever graced a pulpit. Even the tough element admired him and in a short time he had his handsome little church built and paid for, but the congregation was lacking, and the good man had many a Sabbath service and was himself the preacher and congregation. This did not last long, however. The early settlers were bringing their families as the homes were built, and the plucky parson's heart was gladdened by appreciative audiences. Stanton was not one of the dyspeptic canting kind of church men; he was a jolly good fellow and a gentleman always, taking an active part in every measure for the general good of the town and people, winning the love and respect of every one. He was a sure enough "Sky Pilot" to the reckless ones of the wild and woolly west, and his influence for good was greater than he knew.

Writing of Deming wells sets one to ruminating on what a wonderful country this was ages before this ancient history was being made when Pat McGeeney decided to build the house in which the Lindauer Mercantile company now is, he began sinking a well at the rear end of the hut. At a depth of forty feet the Mexicans struck what they thought was a boulder, broke off a large piece

the next election rolled around Bob was a backslider and again in the democratic harness, and remained there until his death, which occurred a short time ago in Arizona. Bob was a true friend and a manly foe, and many a man who wears the broadcloth is his inferior as a man.

One of the infant industries of Deming that thrived without protection and solely upon the merits of its production was Deckert's Deming Brewery. John had come from California early in 1881 and settled in Georgetown, then the mining center of Grant county. Realizing that Deming was destined to be the "Future Great" of the southwest. Mr. Deckert, early in 1882, came to this point, bought the valuable property he now owns on the west side of Gold avenue and built the Deming Brewery, one of the first enterprises in this line in New Mexico. Deming beer soon became famous throughout the southwest, and people journeyed from afar to taste it, and once filled up on this wonderful "brew" never forgot John or Deming. The Brewery Saloon was in the early days the favorite social resort of the best class of people, and has never lost its popularity. In the fire of 1886 all of this property was destroyed, but was quickly rebuilt with better and more substantial structures. With Mr. Deckert was associated for

Newt was considerable of a warbler in those days, and would tackle anything from "La Sonambula" to "Michael Schneider's Party." The latter was his masterpiece, and the occasion and hour had much to do with its rendition. The first public school was taught by Miss Sweezy in the little building which afterwards became the Congregational church, and from such exalted service dropped to the uses of a second hand store. Miss Sweezy was succeeded by Prof. Brown and he by Gussie Shannon. Then the present system of graded schools was put in and the teachers have been too many to name in this sketch. The little building in which Miss Sweezy taught became too small for the demand and within a few years was replaced by a larger one. It, too, was soon found to be not equal to the necessities, and when the present model school building was completed was sold to John Burnside and by him remodeled into the handsome residence now owned by Mr. Jas. S. Fielder. In those days the most liberal and reliable financial banker of these efforts for the schools and in fact, for all other projects of a public character, was Mr. S. Lindauer, the head of the firm of Lindauer, Wormser & Co., and by his donation all other donations were graded.

(Continued next week.)